

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-17 are currently pending. Claim 1-5, 7-9, and 12 have been amended; and Claims 13-17 have been added by the present amendment. The changes and additions to the claims are supported by the originally filed specification and do not add new matter.

In the outstanding Office Action, the drawings were objected to under 37 C.F.R. § 1.84(p)(5) regarding the reference number “2”; and Claims 1-12 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,689,553 to Ahuja et al. (hereinafter “the ‘553 patent”).

Regarding the objection to the drawings, submitted herewith is a Replacement Sheet containing a corrected Figure 2. Figure label 2 has been replaced with figure label 23 in Figure 2. Accordingly, the objection to the drawings is believed to have been overcome.

Amended Claim 1 is directed to a virtual terminal configuring method, comprising:
(a) managing terminal management information associated with a plurality of communication terminals of a user; (b) identifying, when a call addressed to the user is initiated by an initiating communication terminal, those communication terminals of the plurality of communication terminals that can accept the call by referring to (1) an ability needed for a communication involved in the call, and (2) the terminal management information concerning the plurality of communication terminals managed in the step (a); and (c) separating information involved in the call into respective items of information to be sent to the respective communication terminals identified in step (b), and combining respective items of information received from the respective communication terminals identified in step (b) into information to be sent to the initiating communication terminal that initiates the call. Thus, a virtual terminal is formed by the communication terminals identified in step (b), wherein the

virtual terminal communicates with the initiating communication terminal. Claim 1 has been amended for the purpose of clarification only, and no new matter has been added.

The '553 patent is directed to a multimedia telecommunication network that provides telephone service that may involve one or more of audio, video, and data communications. The '553 patent discloses a multimedia telecommunications network that may contain a virtual meeting services complex that provides multimedia telecommunication service to subscribers of the network. Thus, the '553 patent discloses a system that enables communication between various communication devices, irrespective of the different levels of multimedia communications capabilities of the devices. However, Applicants respectfully submit that the '553 patent fails to disclose the steps of (1) identifying, when a call addressed to a user is initiated, those terminals of a plurality of communication terminals that can accept the call *by referring to an ability needed for communication involved in the call* and to terminal management information concerning the plurality of communication terminals; and (2) *separating information involved in the call* into respective items of information to be sent to the respective communication terminals, and combining respective items of information received from the respective communication terminals into information to be sent to an initiating communication terminal that initiates the call. Moreover, Applicants respectfully submit that the '553 patent fails to disclose a *virtual terminal* being formed by the communication terminals identified in step (1) above and the initiating communication terminal. Rather, the '553 patent merely discloses a system to connect together users having diverse equipment to provide telephone service that may involve audio, video, and data communications. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of Claim 1 (and dependent Claims 2 and 3) as anticipated by the '553 patent.

Independent Claims 4, 9, and 12 recite limitations analogous to the limitations recited in amended Claim 1. Moreover, Claims 4, 9, and 12 have been amended in a manner

analogous to the amendment to Claim 1. Accordingly, for the reasons stated above for the patentability of Claim 1, Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of Claim 4 (and dependent Claims 5-8), Claim 9 (and dependent Claims 10 and 11), and Claim 12 as anticipated by the '553 patent.

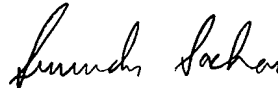
The present amendment also sets forth new Claims 13-17 for examination on the merits. New Claims 13-17 are supported by the originally filed specification and do not add new matter. In particular, Applicants note that Claims 13-17 recite limitations analogous to the limitations recited in Claims 1-12. Moreover, for the reasons stated above for the patentability of Claim 1, Applicants respectfully submit that independent Claims 13, 15, and 17 patentably define over the '553 patent.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claims 1, 4, 9, 12, 13, 15, and 17 (and all associated dependent claims) patentably define over the '553 patent.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the above discussion, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The application as amended herewith is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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